

## RESOURCES FOR COUPLES PREPARING FOR SECOND MARRIAGES

Available through popular booksellers, unless otherwise indicated.

Those marked with [C] available through Cokesbury, (800-672-1789 or [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com))

See also “Resources for Couples Preparing to Marry,” “Marriage Preparation Resources for Pastors and Mentor Couples” and “Premarital Inventories” at [www.marriagelovepower.net](http://www.marriagelovepower.net) under “Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources” in the “Marriage Preparation” section and “Divorce Care and Recovery” and “Helping Stepfamilies Thrive” in the “Ministering with Families in Transition and Crisis” section. You can also search for them by title or topic at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries>

### Books and Workbooks for Remarriage

***Before You Remarry: A Guide to Successful Remarriage***, by H. Norman Wright (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1999). This workbook, for couples in which one or both have been previously married, promotes interaction on the major issues of marriage, including making sure they are ready to marry again. Couples discover how to use positive experiences from previous marriages and how to overcome the negative, along with how to handle common problems related to previous and new in-laws, blended families, financial concerns, and sexual issues. [C]

***Ex-Etiquette for Weddings: The Blended Families' Guide to Tying the Knot***, by Jann Blackstone-Ford and Sharyl Jupe (Chicago Review Press, 2007). This up-to-date wedding guide discusses issues faced by couples forming blended families and by couples with divorced parents: how and when to tell children about remarriage plans; how children from a previous marriage may participate in the new wedding; how to arrange a harmonious seating plan for divorced in-laws; how to graciously word the invitations when the parents of the bride or groom are divorced; who stands where in the wedding pictures and the receiving line; how not to play favorites when among siblings, half-siblings, and stepsiblings; and how to address who walks the bride down the aisle—her father or her stepfather? Includes a list of web sites and books.

***In Love Again and Making it Work: Successful Remarriage***, by Dick Dunn (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2009). The author addresses issues related to divorce and remarriage from a faith perspective and describes what must be done before the wedding and after, when either one or both have been married before, for a marriage to succeed. This update of an earlier work by the author includes a brief guide for individual learning and group discussion. [C]

***Saving Your Second Marriage Before It Starts: Nine Questions to Ask Before (and After) You Remarry***, by Dr. Les Parrott III and Dr. Leslie Parrott (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001). The authors address expectations of marriage; how to cultivate lasting love; the impact of attitudes toward life; appreciation of and adjustment to gender differences; effective speaking and listening skills; how to resolve conflict creatively; ways to deepen the spiritual aspects of a marriage relationship; tools assessing their readiness to remarry; and tools for blending families. See also *Workbook for Men* and *Workbook for Women*. [C]

*Successful Second Marriages*, by Patricia Bubash, M.ED., (Morgan Hill, CA: Bookstand Publishing, 2008). The author shares stories of couples in second marriages, describing how they have built happy, healthy relationships, in spite of the statistical odds against second marriages.

*The Remarriage Checkup: Tools to Help Your Marriage Last a Lifetime*, by Ron Deal, MMFT, and David H. Olson, PhD (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2010). Designed to be used along with the online Couple Checkup, the sixteen chapters in this book explore each of the key qualities of happy remarriage relationships. Each book includes a voucher code for a free Individual Report or discount on a full Couple Checkup at [www.couplecheckup.com](http://www.couplecheckup.com). Click on the tab “For Group Leaders,” then scroll down to “More Couple Checkup Resources for Groups” and click on the links to download free group leader guides.

### **Books and Workbooks for Stepfamilies**

*Ex-Etiquette for Parents: Good Behavior After a Divorce or Separation*, by Jann Blackstone-Ford and Sharyl Jupe (Chicago Review Press, 2004) The authors provide guidance for both biological parents and stepparents to practice healthy interaction and communication and to work together to raise well-adjusted children. In 2008, the authors expanded on one chapter of this book in another book entitled *Ex-Etiquette for Holidays and Other Family Celebrations*.

*How to Win as a Stepfamily*, by Emily Visher and John Visher (Routledge, 2013) The authors provide “sound and viable solutions that get positive results” for “...such issues as former spouses, new grandparents, and legal issues involving custody, visitation, adoption and financial arrangements.” (Amazon review)

*Making Peace in Your Stepfamily*, by Harold H. Bloomfield (Hyperion, 1993) “...innovative ways to defuse inevitable hostilities in blended families, cope with common fantasies of instant success, end power struggles, and encourage communication...exercises, visualizations--and a comprehensive bibliography and list of helpful organizations.” (Amazon review)

*Part-Time Parent: Learning to Live Without Full-Time Custody*, by Carolyn Pogue (Northstone, 1998) “..for non-custodial parents, ...stories of 20 men and women as they go through the initial separation, first birthdays and holidays without the kids, roller-coaster emotions, reflections, regrets, letting go and getting on with their lives.... Originally published as *The Weekend Parent*, this long out-of-print book is reintroduced at the request of family support groups everywhere.” (Amazon Review)

*Stepfamily Realities: How to Overcome Difficulties and Have a Happy Family*, by Margaret Newman (New Harbinger Publications, 1994) The author identifies “the problems, concerns and conflicts in blending families and [provides] realistic suggestions [for] coping and living through these tough times [of adjustment]. (Amazon review)

*Strengthening Your Stepfamily*, by Elizabeth Einstein, M.A., and Linda Albert, Ph.D. (Atascadero, CA: Impact Publishers, 2006). The authors clearly outline the typical stages of

adjustment for stepfamilies and offer practical approaches to help them move from unrealistic expectations to acceptance of and healthy adjustment to their new reality. Interspersed with the sixteen very readable chapters are eight Stepfamily Workshop sessions, making this book a highly effective tool for stepfamily support groups.

***The Smart Step-Family: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family***, by Ron L. Deal (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002). The author provides guidance for recognizing the unique personality and place of each family member, dealing with the everyday challenges of step-parenting and stepchildren relationships, communicating effectively with ex-spouses, honoring families of origin while developing new traditions, and taking time to grow stepfamilies slowly instead of expecting instant results. He emphasizes the spiritual needs of stepfamilies and teaches how to help them rediscover a redemptive God who “loves, forgives, and provides strength and direction for the journey” (p. 51). Discussion questions at the end of each chapter could be used in small groups or by couples on their own to learn how to adjust expectations, deal with the common pitfalls of stepfamilies, and cope with unique situations, such as special-needs children.

***The Smart Stepmom***, by Ron Deal and Laura Petherbridge (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2009). The authors use their personal and professional skills and experiences to provide stepmothers with the information, attitudes, and skills to succeed in what is rapidly becoming the most common family form in the United States of America. The text provides clear analysis and helpful strategies for dealing with various pitfalls and challenges in ways that will help stepmoms not only survive, but thrive. [C]

### **Support Group and Study Resources for Stepfamilies**

(See also books which include discussion guides on the Reading List above.)

***Active Parenting for Stepfamilies Program Kit***, by Michael H. Popkin, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Einstein, MA, LMFT. This video-based discussion program provides parents and stepparents with the skills needed to guide children through a family transition and to establish a solid framework for a successful stepfamily. Kit contains DVD sessions, a Leader’s Guide, Parent’s Guide, and promotional materials. You will need a copy of the Parent’s Guide for each couple or individual. Available in either 3-session or 6-session formats through [www.ActiveParenting.com](http://www.ActiveParenting.com) or [www.stepfamilyliving.com](http://www.stepfamilyliving.com). You can also order relevant video libraries and other books, including *A Heart Full of Love* (for ages 5-9) and *The Step-Tween Survival Guide* and sign up or training workshops or webinars.

***Developing a Successful Stepfamily Ministry***, by Dick Dunn (Seagrove Beach, Florida: Singles and Stepfamily Ministries, 1995). This workbook, designed to help churches start and carry out an effective ministry providing practical support for blended families, includes a cassette tape and a copy of Dick Dunn’s book, *Willing to Try Again: Steps Toward Blending a Family*. The manual leads a planning team of stepfamily couples step by step through a six-session process for developing a stepfamily ministry. Available at [www.marriagesavers.org](http://www.marriagesavers.org), click on Store.

## Organizations and Websites for Stepfamilies

**Bonus Families** ([www.bonusfamilies.com](http://www.bonusfamilies.com)), founded by Jann Blackstone-Ford, a divorce and stepfamily mediator, and Sharyl Jupe, Jann's husband's ex-wife, focuses on helping all the parent figures, both bio and bonus, to work together to raise healthy, well-adjusted kids after their parents split up. Bonus Families® believes that parents have a moral obligation to put their own interests aside for the sake of their children--or their partner's children. The authors have written several books (see above), and Jann writes for an advice column titled "Ex-Etiquette," frequently referring back to their "Ten Rules of Good Ex-Etiquette."

**Smart Stepfamilies**, [www.smartstepfamilies.com](http://www.smartstepfamilies.com), founded by Ron Deal, LMFT. This organization provides resources to help stepfamilies move toward healthy living and to equip churches to minister to their unique needs. Visit this website for articles, a free e-newsletter, online webinars, videos, book reviews, curriculum materials (*Remarriage Success*, *The Smart Stepfamily*), couple checkup, and conference information.

**Stepfamily Living**, [www.stepfamilyliving.com](http://www.stepfamilyliving.com), founded by Elizabeth Einstein. In addition to her book *Strengthening Stepfamilies*, described above, the author offers a set of four CDs or audio-cassettes ("Preparing for Remarriage," "The Stepfamily Journey," "The Couple's Spiritual Challenge," and "Guiding Grandparents in the Stepfamily"); four booklets ("Preparing for Remarriage," "Pitfalls and Possibilities," "Dealing with Discipline," and "Encouragement and Enrichment"); and other resources. You will also find information about her workshops and coaching practice.

**The National Stepfamily Resource Center**, 2315 Centennial Mall South, Suite 212, Lincoln, NE, 68508, 800-735-0329, [www.stepfam.org](http://www.stepfam.org). This national non-profit organization offers resources and valuable information for step-families. Offerings include a free "Online Stepparenting Tool Kit."

[www.successfulstepfamily.com](http://www.successfulstepfamily.com) Visit this website to download a free document, "Bonding with Your Stepchild: How to Create a Peaceful Stepfamily by Creating Peace With Your Stepchild...Now!" by Mark Thompson. Faithbased and written out of his own experiences, this document outlines three strategic steps: Retreat (stop trying so hard); Release (give it over to God and pray for your stepchildren), and Relax (ease into a relationship by carefully finding nonthreatening ways to connect). You can also purchase his ebook, "Building a Positive, Peaceful, and Successful Stepfamily"

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